

# Wildlife Diversity News

*A Publication of the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program*

## Iowa BCA Receives International Recognition



Cerulean Warbler photo from US Department of Energy.

Iowa Audubon, the National Audubon Society (NAS) and Bird Conservation International (BCI) announced in September that Iowa DNR's Effigy Mounds-Yellow River Forest Bird Conservation Area (BCA) has been named a "*Globally Important Bird Area*". This large, forested, north-east Iowa landscape was one of the early BCAs created by DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program, part of

a plan to designate multiple BCAs across the state. Each BCA is anchored by large blocks of permanently protected bird habitat and also includes thousands of surrounding private acres that provide good existing or potential avian habitat.

Iowa Audubon, a statewide organization focusing upon bird conservation and education, conducts a complementary program of Important Bird Areas (IBAs). IBAs are an international effort to designate sites critical to declining bird species, for nesting or as stopovers for large migration concentrations. Initiated by United Kingdom-based Bird Conservation International, the program is conducted by partner organizations in many nations around the world. In the U.S., the National Audubon Society oversees the IBA program, working with local partner organizations in all but a few states. Iowa Audubon serves as the local partner group here.

More than 12,000 IBAs are designated worldwide, with nearly 2,700 in the U.S., 91 located in Iowa. Today, each DNR Bird Conservation Area has co-designation as an Audubon Important Bird Area. To be named a Globally Important Bird Area, a state IBA must meet strict requirements backed by research indicating the site's importance to imperiled birds. Effigy Mounds-Yellow River Forest IBA was documented by Jon Stravers, of McGregor, IA, as critical habitat for Cerulean Warblers, a species whose U.S. population has plummeted 70% since 1966. Stravers located hundreds of nesting Cerulean Warblers within the BCA/IBA. Based upon this evidence, BCI has announced that Effigy Mounds-Yellow River Forest and surrounding lands had been given the official designation as a Globally Important Bird Area, the first such designation in Iowa.

Formal recognition is planned during the HawkWatch event, Oct. 5, 2013, at Effigy Mounds National Monument. For more information about the IBA program, visit [www.audubon.org/bird/iba/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/) and <http://www.iowaaudubon.org/IBA/>.

- Doug Harr  
President, Iowa Audubon

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**Summer 2013**

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*Cooperators in this IBA include the National Park Service, Iowa DNR, National Audubon Society, Iowa Audubon, US Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Alamakee and Clayton County Conservation Boards, plus many private landowners.*

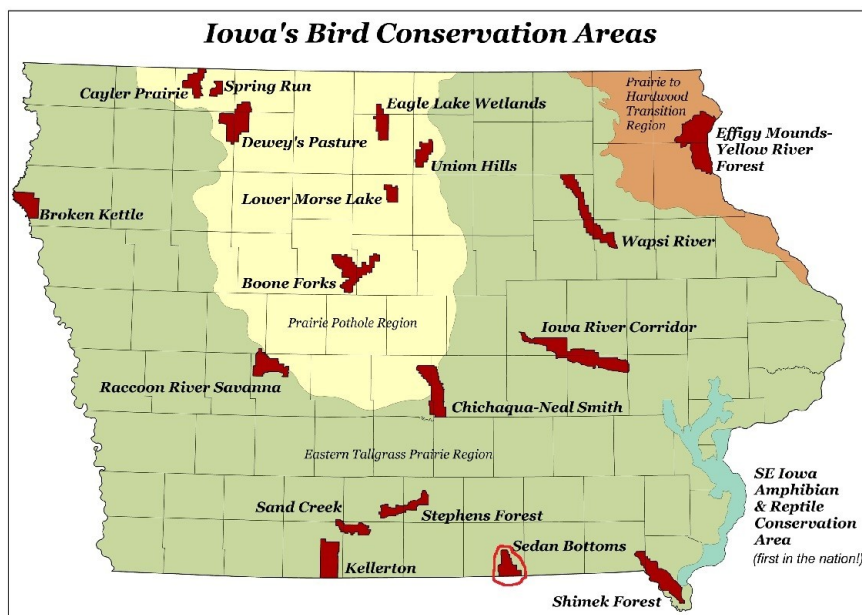
## Sedan Bottoms Bird Conservation Area—

### A Bird Diversity Hotspot

On July 3, 2013 a 37,070 acre area encompassing Sedan Bottoms WMA, Sharon Bluffs State Park, and other important wildlife habitat in Appanoose County was dedicated as Iowa's 18<sup>th</sup> official Bird Conservation Area (BCA). The Chariton River flows down the center of this BCA, and the area extends from State Highway #2 to the Missouri border. One of the greatest reasons for this area's uniqueness is the fact that it includes over 7,500 acres of protected lands, both DNR owned and privately owned Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easements. Adding to this uniqueness is the fact that directly over the BCA border to the south is Missouri's Rebel's Cove Conservation Area, where there exists another 4,225 acres of publicly owned forests, grasslands, and wetlands. Although the concept has not yet been initiated, there exists excellent potential at this site to establish a larger interstate Bird Conservation Area that transcends state borders.

Sedan Bottoms holds some of the best bird habitat in the state, and it is one of the leading areas for total number of bird species that can be seen or heard. To date, approximately 120 breeding birds and an additional 133 migrant bird species that use this critical habitat have been identified. Especially important is the fact that 73 out of Iowa's 85 Birds of Greatest Conservation Need can be found inhabiting Sedan Bottoms, which is more than has been found in 16 other Iowa BCAs. Sedan Bottoms has particular value for grassland and wetland bird species, and the Rathbun Wildlife Unit staff, who manage the area, focus much of their efforts on wetland species, particularly waterfowl. Private land managers, like Steve Archer and Robert Doll, manage their Wetland Reserve Program acres for a host of wildlife species, and they were pleasantly surprised in 2009 when Trumpeter Swans hatched cygnets on their wetlands.

This area was selected as a Bird Conservation Area because of its importance to grassland birds, the fastest declining bird group in this country; and it was selected because the area contains a variety of habitat types. Grassland covers nearly half of the landscape within this BCA. About one-third of the area is tree-covered, by savanna and woodlands, and wetlands and row crop land make up most of the rest of the area. Declining nesting grassland birds, such as Bobolink, Northern Bobwhite, Eastern Meadowlark, Field Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, and Iowa's Threatened Henslow's Sparrow, all will benefit from the establishment of this



Map showing BCA locations in Iowa.

**To learn more about Iowa DNR's  
Bird Conservation Area program, go to:**

**[http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WildlifeStewardship/  
NonGameWildlife/Conservation/BirdConservationAreas.aspx](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WildlifeStewardship/NonGameWildlife/Conservation/BirdConservationAreas.aspx)**

## Sedan Bottoms BCA continued from page 2



new BCA. Wetland birds including Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned night herons, rails, coots, and waterfowl, like Trumpeter Swans, all nest here; as do forest birds, like the State Threatened Red-shouldered Hawk, Whip-poor-will, American Woodcock, and Wood Thrush. Savanna birds found here include Barn Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Summer Tanager, and Northern Mockingbird. In the fall, this is a great place to find migrants like Nelson's and LeConte's sparrows. This BCA also is designated an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA). The National Audubon Society's Important Bird Area Program is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity, and Sedan Bottoms BCA/IBA certainly quali-

fies as vital habitat to many declining bird species.

Sedan Bottoms BCA would not be a reality if not for the partnerships developed among conservation agencies, private conservation organizations, and active public citizens. Speakers at the ceremony representing the partners that joined efforts to create this extraordinary bird habitat and BCA were: Jeff Telleen, Rathbun Unit DNR Wildlife Biologist; Chuck Corell, DNR Conservation and Recreation Division Administrator; Bruce Ehresman, DNR Wildlife Diversity Bird Biologist; Joe McGovern, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation President; Doug Harr, Iowa Audubon President; Margaret Cope, District Conservationist with Natural Resources Conservation Service; Ray Cummins, Past President of Rathbun Bird Club; and Mark Hoffman, Appanoose County Conservation Board Director. Another partner in this effort is US Army Corps of Engineers.

Future plans for this BCA include establishing a bird viewing platform and creating a map that shows where particular bird species might be seen. Erica Eaves and Shane Patterson, AmeriCorps Wildlife Diversity Research Assistants, created a brochure for this BCA, which includes a bird list and is available from this office.

- Bruce Ehresman,  
WDP Biologist

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## Diversity Dispatch

### Breaking News in the Wide World of Wildlife



#### Does Shark Week Harm Conservation Efforts?

*Great White Serial Killer. Sharkpocalypse.* These are just a few of the programs airing during the Discovery Channel's annual *Shark Week* and NatGeo Wild's new copy-cat, *Sharkfest*. Undoubtedly these programs will attract their usual massive ratings, but they may be guilty of the same kinds of film fakery that plagues many wildlife films, where the images on your screen don't tell a full or even truthful story. If the populace is thinking of sharks as dangerous, why would anyone save them?

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/extinction-countdown/2013/08/05/film-fakery-shark-week/>

#### Climate Change Affects Disease Spread

Scientists have discovered that the spread of infectious diseases is being affected by Climate Change, which could have enormous implications for mapping diseases in the future. In a number of infectious disease systems, such as Lyme disease and West Nile Virus, biodiversity loss is tied to greater pathogen transmission and increased human risk.

<http://www.scienceworldreport.com/articles/8607/20130805/climate-change-affects-disease-spread-need-forecast.htm>



Tick photo from  
[www.dpd.cdc.gov](http://www.dpd.cdc.gov)



Raven photo by Stephen  
Dinsmore, ISU

#### Mysterious deaths of Ravens in Canada

A strange affliction has been paralyzing and then killing Ravens in a region of British Columbia, wildlife experts say. More than 30 birds have died. A spokesperson for British Columbia's Fish and Wildlife Branch said it could not comment until lab tests are completed but that its experts do not believe there is a risk to humans.

[http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/2013/07/17/Mysterious-condition-causing-paralysis-death-in-ravens-in-Canada/UPI-89791374091521/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2013/07/17/Mysterious-condition-causing-paralysis-death-in-ravens-in-Canada/UPI-89791374091521/)

#### Sea Turtle Nests Hit a record in Georgia

More than 2,141 Loggerhead Sea Turtle nests (last year's record total, have been documented on barrier island beaches. While the nesting season is nearly over, the total will not be final until fall. Nest totals have climbed steadily since 2009, the longest such span in 25 years and an encouraging change from the usual up and down fluctuations in loggerhead nesting.

<http://www.wctv.tv/news/headlines/Sea-Turtle-Nests-Hit-A-Record-In-Georgia-219430851.html?ref=851>



Turtle photo by Mark Dodd, Georgia  
DNR

## Diversity Dispatch continued from page 4

### Rare Bobcat Spotted in Cape Cod, Massachusetts

A bobcat has been spotted on Cape Cod for the first time in centuries, according to state and local wildlife experts who reviewed a video shot by a Falmouth man earlier this month. State and local wildlife officials later took a look and confirmed that it was a bobcat, which haven't been seen on Cape Cod since Colonial times. It's unclear how the cat made it across the Cape Cod Canal. It's unlikely it swam across, and more likely that it crossed one of the two bridges from the mainland.

<http://www.pressherald.com/news/bobcat-spotted-in-cape-cod-community-2013-08-23.html>



Bobcat photo Iowa DNR

### Wildlife Biologists Investigating Mass Elk Deaths

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is investigating the cause of death of more than 100 elk found in northeast NM. Within a 1/2 mile area. "At this time we're looking into all possible causes, including epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD)," said Kerry Mower, the department's wildlife disease specialist. "What we do know ...is that the dies-off appears to be confined to a relatively small area and that the elk were not shot by poachers."

<http://www.kob.com/article/stories/S3143439.shtml?cat=504>



Yellow Warbler photo by Jim Durbin.

### Birds Protect Costa Rica's Coffee Crop

Research in Costa Rica shows that Yellow Warblers and other birds significantly reduce damage by eating the Coffee Berry Borer Beetle (*Hypothenemus hampei*). This beetle is originally from Africa. The more forest grew on and near a coffee farm, the more birds the farm had, resulting in lower beetle infestation rates.

<http://www.nature.com/news/birds-protect-costa-rica-s-coffee-crop-1.13689>

### United for Wildlife

Prince William (the Duke of Cambridge) has created a new partnership called **United for Wildlife** to address illegal wildlife trade issues. Organizations represented in the partnership include Conservation International, Fauna & Flora International, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wildlife Federation—UK, and the Zoological Society of London. Kensington Palace describes United for Wildlife as "a long-term commitment to tackle the global challenges to the world's natural resources so they can be safeguarded for future generations."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/prince-william/10304841/Duke-of-Cambridge-and-David-Beckham-join-forces-to-fight-illegal-wildlife-trade.html>

*For additional news stories on wildlife and related topics, visit:*

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/TWSWildlifeNews>



## Conservation and Habitat Use of Translocated Greater Prairie Chickens in Iowa

Greater Prairie Chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*) were once an abundant game species in Iowa. As native grasslands in Iowa were converted to intensive agriculture, habitat loss and over-harvesting led to a dramatic decline and eventual extinction of Prairie Chickens in Iowa.

In 1980, the Iowa Conservation Commission (now the Iowa DNR) began an effort to bring Prairie Chickens back to the state. Between 1980 and 1994, 558 birds were relocated from Kansas to Iowa. Although the efforts initially appeared to be successful, by 1999 the population had decreased dramatically, and by 2009, only a handful of birds remained in southern Iowa. Because of the small size of the current population, Prairie Chickens in Iowa suffer from low genetic diversity.

In the spring of 2012, in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, we began a project to trap and relocate Greater Prairie Chickens from Nebraska to Iowa. The long-term goal of the Iowa DNR's translocation effort is to continue to develop a large-scale grassland landscape and to establish a viable population of Greater Prairie Chickens in the Grand River Grassland Area of Southern Iowa. The translocations will take place over the next 4 years.

As part of a project to evaluate the success of the current translocation efforts, we are examining habitat use of translocated Prairie Chickens using satellite telemetry. Prior to release, we attached 10 Solar AR-GOS satellite/GPS transmitters (Microwave Telemetry, Inc., model PTT-100, 22 grams) to female Prairie Chickens translocated from Nebraska to Iowa in April 2013. The transmitters were attached to the birds via rump mounted figure-8 harnesses. Using a rump mount places the solar panel of the GPS transmitter to allow maximum solar exposure and battery life.



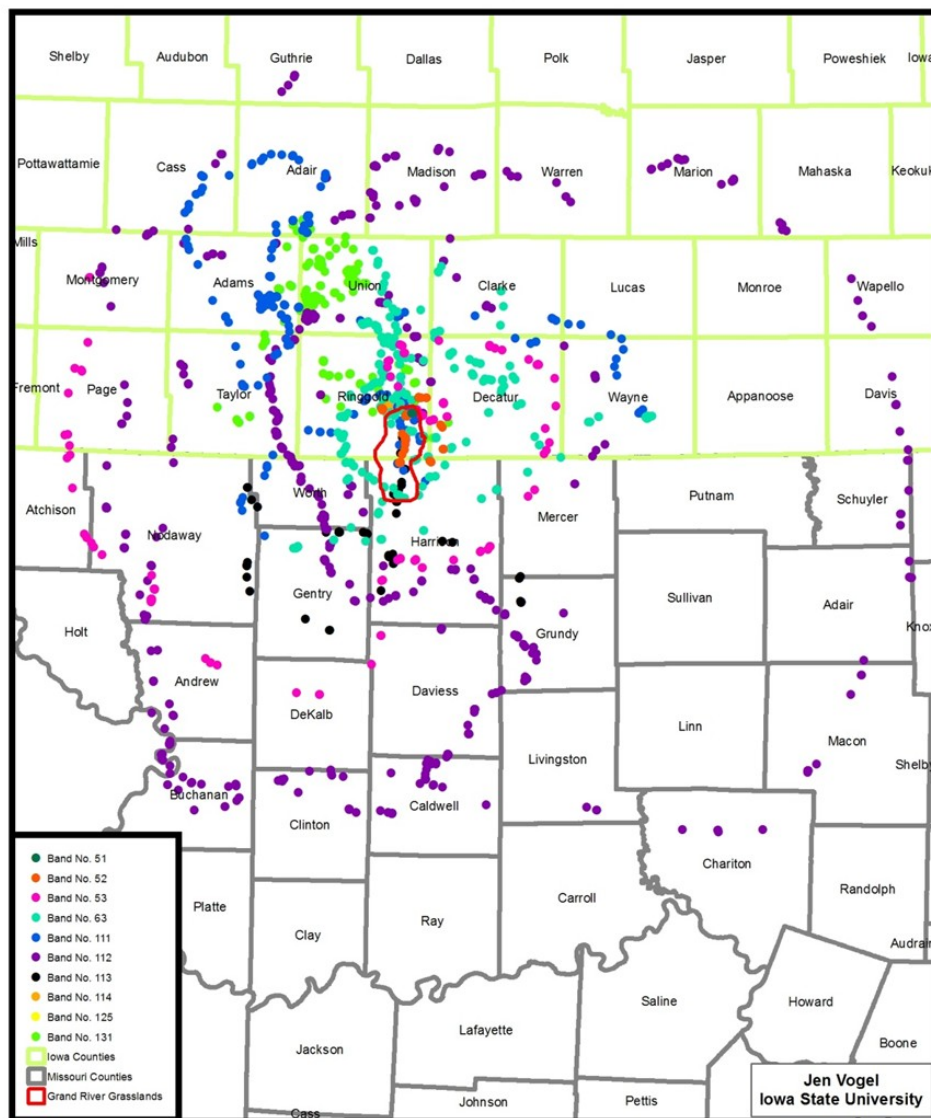
Female Prairie Chicken being fitted with radio transmitter. Photo by Angi Bruce, Iowa DNR

The satellite/GPS transmitters have enabled us to obtain much more detailed information about the movements of the birds than we would have been able to obtain using a traditional VHF transmitter. The transmitters are configured to take 6 locations each day, allowing us to examine bird movements throughout the day.

Since their release, the birds have traveled through 19 counties in southern Iowa and 18 counties in northern Missouri. As expected with translocated birds, we have had high mortality of our study birds. One still living bird, band number 112, has traveled over 1,180 miles since her release five

## Prairie Chickens continued from page 6

**GPS Locations of 10 Translocated Prairie Chickens  
in Iowa and Missouri from April - September 2013**



months ago. Since late August, however, she seems to have settled down and is now spending her time in southwestern Union County.

In addition to looking at habitat use of the translocated birds, we are conducting extensive habitat surveys of the release locations and we will develop a habitat suitability model for Prairie Chickens in Iowa using the telemetry locations and landcover data for the state. The project will also examine the effects adding translocated birds will have on the resident population's genetic diversity.

This project is a partnership between the Iowa DNR, Iowa State University, the Iowa and Missouri Chapters of The Nature Conservancy, and The Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, Iowa.

*- Jen Vogel,  
ISU Post-doctoral Associate*





## Unexpected Surprises—Blanding's Turtles

*Editor's note: Andrew Huck, an AmeriCorps Member at one of the Iowa DNR Wildlife Management Units in Northwest Iowa has been tracking Blanding's turtles using radio-telemetry this summer. This project is a rare opportunity for us in that there was a staff member (Andrew) interested in studying what is happening with the local turtle population and the Iowa DNR had some currently unused equipment from various past projects which Andrew was able to adapt for his needs. Here is what Andrew tells us:*



**Blanding's Turtle with radio attached.**  
**Photo by Andrew Huck, Iowa DNR**  
**AmeriCorps Member**

The Blanding's turtle is a state threatened species that inhabits a variety of habitats across Iowa. In the prairie pothole region of northwest Iowa, they spend most of their time in vegetation-choked shallow water lakes. Habitat loss is the main treat to the turtle, along with vehicles. An adult turtle, which can be up to eleven inches long and weigh six pounds, has few predators; however, hatchling turtles have many predators. Blanding's turtles do not become reproductively mature until eight to ten years of age, and females only nest once a year, some even skip a year. Female turtles go back to the same area to nest, usually to the place where they were born. Nests are usually found in the associated uplands of wetlands in sandy, well-drained soil. Females can spend days on land trekking to the nesting grounds, which can be over a mile away from the nearest water. Within the first couple of days of the eggs being laid, the nests are subject to predation from skunks, raccoons, coyotes and other predators. All of these factors make for a low population.

It has become rare to see an adult Blanding's turtle, let alone a hatchling, and little is known about the populations across the state. At the Prairie Lakes Wildlife Unit in northwest Iowa, a project was started

this spring to see what the population of Blanding's turtles was like in the area. Because of the drought of 2012, many wetlands were dried up, concentrating the turtles in certain areas. In the spring of 2013, traps were set and a few radio-transmitters were obtained to track female turtles to their nesting sites. The year started slow with the heavy rain, but a few females were radio-tagged. Around the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the staff found and protected four nests, two nests were in prairie, one was in a gravel road, and one in an agricultural field.

During the course of the summer, the females were tracked to their summering hole, a shallow pond choked with submergent vegetation, crayfish, snails, and minnows. Here the turtles could put on weight they lost from the ordeal of nesting. Males also arrived at the pond to breed. So far a total of 16 Blanding's turtles have been marked at the pond. As the summer drew on and with the lack of rain, the pond started drying up. Some turtles chose to stay and overwinter in a deeper portion of the pond, but some moved on.

Around the beginning to middle of September, the turtle hatchlings should emerge from the nest. The staff will try to track some of the hatchlings with fluorescent powder or paint to learn more about their movements and find their overwintering areas. The information learned from the project will help the wildlife management staff improve and protect the habitats vital to the Blanding's turtle. With a little luck, hopefully the population of this amazing turtle will recover.

- Andrew Huck  
Iowa DNR AmeriCorps Member, Prairie Lakes Unit



## Species Spotlight—Sedge Sprite (*Nehalennia irene*)

The Sedge Sprite is one of five species belonging to the genus *Nehalennia*, or the sprites. Like the other sprites, it is a very small damselfly (about 1 inch long) characterized by its gorgeous metallic green color on the top of its head, thorax, and abdomen with blue on its eyes and at the base of its abdomen. Males typically have the aforementioned coloration whereas females still possess the metallic green coloration but will often have a lime green color where the males are blue. Without noting the metallic green coloration, this species can easily be confused with other small damselfly species such as the Eastern or Fragile Forktail (*Ischnura verticalis* and *Ischnura posita*, respectively). Unlike some of its counterparts in the damselfly world, the Sedge Sprite can be quite secretive, often found deep in robust stands of emergent vegetation and moving infrequently.

Although its range extends throughout the entire state, this species is limited to the northern half of the state where prairie wetlands are more abundant. According to the Iowa Odonates website, the Sedge Sprite has been found in 49 of Iowa's 99 counties, mostly north of Interstate 80. It occupies wetland habitats that possess a sedge meadow zone consisting of dense beds of sedges (*Carex* spp.). It can also be found in more open stands of other types of emergent vegetation, although less frequently. Due to its somewhat secretive nature, the Sedge Sprite is often more common at wetlands than it first appears. It's typically best to search for this wetland beauty from early June through early August.

Despite being relatively common in Iowa, the Sedge Sprite may be in danger. Sedge meadows, the habitat this species occupies, are declining in Iowa and throughout much of the Midwest due to wetland destruction. In prairie wetlands, sedge meadows serve as a transition zone between the dense emergent vegetation around the wetland basin and the upland habitats that surround the wetland. These zones are commonly



missing from most prairie wetlands due to consistently high water levels, spread of non-native species of emergent vegetation (Reed Canarygrass [*Phalaris arundinacea*] or non-native cattails [*Typha* spp.]), and encroachment of woody vegetation. In addition, the fertile soils that comprise these habitats are often desired for agricultural production resulting in widespread draining of wetlands across the Midwest, particularly in Iowa. Therefore, the need to conserve and restore wetlands and associated sedge meadow habitats is critical for not just the Sedge Sprite, but for several other species of wetland-associated wildlife.

So next time you are stomping through a prairie wetland in northern Iowa, be sure to keep your eye out for this wetland gem!

Sedge Sprite photo by Ann Johnson.

- Tyler Harms,  
MSIM Biologist

## American Kestrel Nest Boxes

In spring 1985 this image of the American Kestrel, Iowa's smallest falcon, graced the cover of the Iowa Conservationist magazine. Photographer Lowell Washburn was sharing an exciting project that was occurring in north central Iowa. DNR Furbearer biologist Ron Andrews noticed the hovering raptor was providing a great show foraging for mice along Interstate 35 in north central Iowa. The grassed roadways were an excellent source for mice and meadow voles. However, there were no large trees with accompanying cavities for nesting. Ron secured permission from the Iowa Department of Transportation to embark on a partnership of placing kestrel nest boxes along interstate and state highways around Iowa. Ron worked with an eagle scout candidate, Trent Bales, to place kestrel boxes behind the directional signs along the Interstate 35 right-of-way in 1983. The nest boxes completed an essential component the kestrels needed to successfully nest and prosper.

By 1985, the fledgling Wildlife Diversity Program had constructed 88 boxes to boost Ron's effort. News of the Kestrel Nest Box Program spread through the County Conservation Boards and non-governmental environmental organizations across the state. Boxes began being placed along I-35 from Worth County, Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Hardin, Story, Polk, Warren, Clarke and Decatur Counties. There were also boxes placed along I-380 and Hwy 30 and 20 and many county blacktops for good measure.



Later in the 1980s Dr. Erv Klaas with the (then) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cooperative Research Unit at Iowa State University, recruited Dan Varland to study this impressive species. Varland placed radio transmitters on young kestrels to learn dispersal and mortality. He knew the adults were using the Interstate right-of-way for some foraging and nesting in our boxes. However, it was learned the young kestrels hunted away from the interstate right-of-ways. They also hunted in a group similar to western Harris Hawks. Their foraging included quite a few grasshoppers and dragonflies in their diet, especially shortly after fledging or taking their first flights. It was reassuring

to learn that 67% of the boxes were being used by nesting kestrels. Also, Dr. Varland's work concluded that there was only one death from a vehicle during his three year study. Many states from Idaho to Tennessee and Minnesota to Texas began placing boxes along their roadways for the benefit of American Kestrels.

But as all good things require updating and maintenance, there will also be changes. Last year the Iowa DOT determined that due to increased traffic along the roadways, kestrel caretakers were placing themselves and other travelers in peril while maintaining the boxes. The boxes will be removed from behind the directional signs in the coming months.

Right-of-way seedings have improved with prairie species that greatly benefit mice and insects. This is perfect foraging habitat for American Kestrels. However, the need for mature trees with cavities still exist for cavity nesting raptors along the grassland right-of-ways of the majority of our Iowa roads.

As change will occur, there will be enhanced efforts by wildlife stewards to improve our environment. Bob Anderson with his Raptor Resource Project exhibits that tenacity very well. Bob was able to work with the Winneshiek County engineer to place boxes along secondary gravel roads in Winneshiek Co. However,





## Kestrels continued from page 10



there are also dangers in having nest boxes on power-line utility poles. Therefore the Raptor Resource Project, including John Dingley and Dave Kester, have constructed poles for their kestrel boxes. They begin by screwing two 16 foot 2x4s together creating a 3" x 3 1/2" pole. Next they screw a third 2x4 perpendicular to the other two to create a sturdy 3 1/2" x 5" pole. Then they place the box between 10 to 12 feet high. Bob reports three out of four of their boxes were successful at fledging kestrels this year. In addition these boxes can provide a cavity for Screech Owls, and an occasional bluebird pair have been known to utilize kestrel boxes.

It is unfortunate that traffic has increased to the degree that boxes can no longer be maintained safely along the interstates and Iowa's busy pavements. When life presents lemons,,, make lemonade. There are many opportunities for nest box placement along farm fields next to roadways, lanes to farmsteads, and onto buildings close to roadways. Bob has taken to referring to Winneshiek County roadways as "voleways." Meadow voles are a key food source for raptors or birds of prey like American Kestrels.

It has been shown that local populations of American Kestrels

can be enhanced where nest boxes can be placed and maintained.

**It is now our hope that individuals can take up where the I 35 and Highway 20 nest box corridors leave off.** If you have interest or know a landowner whose property borders a secondary or county black top where nest boxes can be placed, please give it a try. As the DOT returns boxes, we will be looking for kestrel caretakers seeking new sites for these boxes. Or feel free to try your hand at constructing a box from nest box plans.

We've learned a lot in the 30 plus years of kestrel caretaking. One fact is these fascinating raptors are capable of guiding our environmental mission to improve wildlife habitat in Iowa anyway that we can. Providing secure nest boxes can enhance prairie areas where large savannah oaks or cottonwoods with cavities are not dotting the landscape. Caretaking for kestrels can provide a positive link to a species that benefits from our stewardship efforts, and American Kestrels are just a great bird to have with us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

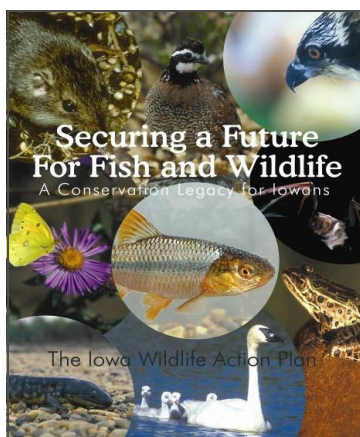


- Pat Schlarbaum,  
WDP Technician

*For plans to build your own Kestrel Nesting Box, visit:*

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/habitat/WildAcres/wakestrelboxplan.html>

## Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Revision Underway!



In 2005, each state developed a proactive “Wildlife Action Plan” to conserve wildlife and natural places. When Congress mandated the development of these plans, they also required them to be fully reviewed, and, if needed, revised by 2015. This requirement helps to keep the action plans relevant and useful. The Iowa Wildlife Action Plan was developed by a coalition of scientists, sportsmen and women, educators, conservationists and community members. The plan outlines actions to conserve wildlife and natural places, protecting clean air and water. Implementing the Plan is a coordinated effort; we can only be successful by working together in our communities. To better coordinate across many organizations and individuals, we have developed an Implementation Committee and several associated working groups and subcommittees, each with representation from a variety of organizations, agencies, and communities.

*To Learn More about Iowa's Wildlife Action Plan visit:*

[http://www.iowadnr.gov/  
Environment/WildlifeStewardship/  
IowaWildlifeActionPlan.aspx](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WildlifeStewardship/IowaWildlifeActionPlan.aspx)

If you are interested in opportunities to Review and Comment on Portions of Revision: Email Katy Reeder, Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Manager, [Katy.Reeder@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Katy.Reeder@dnr.iowa.gov) or call (515) 281-8396.

*- Katy Reeder,  
IWAP Coordinator*

## Preparing for the Monarch Migration

On Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Wildlife Diversity Program, DNR Prairie Resource Center and Webster County Conservation Board partnered to hold a Monarch tagging event at Brushy Creek Recreation Area. The event started at 1:00 and even though it poured down rain until roughly 12:59, there was a good crowd of about 50 people who attended and everyone had good luck and a good time catching a decent haul of butterflies. In the end we had tagged 11 Monarchs and gotten to ogle up close at least 11 additional species.

It was good to see as many Monarchs as we did. They had the worst year on record last year, primarily because of the drought which knocked out many of the milkweed and nectar sources Monarchs require during migration. Numbers do not seem to have rebounded hugely this year but they do appear better than last. Monarch tagging is one way scientists monitor migration patterns and the monarch population, and it is something anyone can do in their own backyard!

*- Stephanie Shepherd,  
WDP Biologist*

*To Learn More about Monarch tagging visit:  
[www.monarchwatch.org](http://www.monarchwatch.org)*





## News from the Frog Pond

The Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program relies on the USFWS State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program for funding for many of our most critical projects, like the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Implementation and the Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring Program. In addition to the 'formula' SWG funds (which are allocated to each state based on a formula using state area and population size) we also compete for SWG-C, or Competitive SWG funds. The

SWG-C program began in 2008. To get these monies, we partner with other states to submit grant applications to the USFWS and compete against other State Agencies. This year we submitted 3 proposals, and 2 of those were funded.

Both projects focus on public and private land management along with monitoring to ensure the management did what we wanted it to do. One of the projects will be within the Grand River Grasslands area of Iowa and Missouri using Prairie Chickens as a focal species. The other project will be on lands along the Cedar River, West Fork of the Cedar River, and Beaver Creek in Black Hawk and Butler Counties to benefit the Wood Turtle. In addition, similar work for Wood Turtles and other riverine turtle species will be done in our partner states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

We must, of course, also talk about the state of Federal Funding. The Teaming with Wildlife (TWW) Coalition has been gathering organization signatures for a National Sign-On letter to tell Congress they support various grant programs (SWG, but also the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund and 3 other programs) which have been zeroed out in the current version of the House budget for FY14.



**Wood turtle with radio-transmitter attached.**  
Photo: Jeff Tamplin, UNI.

Around 841 signatures representing more than 1,600 different organizations signed the letter nationwide, and in Iowa, 24 organizations signed. By the way, Iowa is currently 8th in the nation for having the most organizations belong to TWW.

- Karen Kinkead  
WDP Coordinator



**Stephanie and a volunteer attach a numbered tag to a Monarch butterfly.** Photo by Bill Johnson, Iowa DNR.



## Last Look



Dustin Paulus, Jeff Fiesel, Andy Huck, Rob Patterson, and Lucas Straw at the Iowa DNR Prairie Lakes Management Unit, all with adult Blanding's Turtles. August 2013. Photo by Bryan Hellyer. For more information about this photo and Blanding's turtles, see page 8 inside this newsletter.

## Events Calendar

**Joint Meeting of Iowa Wildlife Society and Iowa Society of American Foresters**  
October 2-3, 2013; Decorah, IA;  
<http://iowatws.org/>

**Hawk Watch**  
October 4-5, 2013; Effigy Mounds, IA  
- Global IBA dedication at noon.

**The Wildlife Society National Meeting**  
October 5-10, 2013; Milwaukee, WI  
<http://wildlifesociety.org/>

**Iowa Ornithologists' Meeting**  
October 11-13, 2013; Clinton, IA; <http://iowabirds.org/Meetings/NextMeeting.aspx>

**HawkWatch at WoodWard Depot**  
October 12, 2013 Saylorville Lake 10-4 pm

**Fall Into Birds**  
October 26, 2013, 12-4 pm; Crown Point Community Center, Johnston, IA

**Christmas Bird Counts**  
Start December 14; see <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count> for more information

## A Publication of the

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